

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 211303

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DRAFTED BY EUR/IB:TGMARTIN:BAS

APPROVED BY EUR - WELLS STABLER

EUR/IB - MR. RABENOLD

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 211303

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PO

SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR PROTESTS NEWSPAPER ARTICLE
REGARDING USE OF LAJES

1. AMBASSADOR THEMIDO CALLED ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY STABLER OCT. 24 TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP CONCERN OVER BENJAMIN WELLES ARTICLE IN CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR OCT. 20 UNDER HEADLINE "ONLY PORTUGAL CLEARING US FLIGHTS TO ISRAEL." BESIDES IDENTIFYING TYPES OF AIRCRAFT INVOLVED, STORY POINTED OUT PORTUGUESE FEARS OF ARAB HOSTILITY, REFERRED TO "US DIPLOMATIC ARM TWISTING" AND MENTIONED ADMINISTRATION PROMISES TO TRY TO HEAD OFF AN ANTI-PORTUGUESE AMENDMENT TO THE CURRENT FOREIGN-AID BILL NOW IN CONFERENCE BETWEEN THE SENATE AND HOUSE.

2. PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR SAID WELLES SO WELL INFORMED HE ASSUMED STORY GIVEN HIM BY SOMEONE IN USG. HE SAID HE WAS CERTAIN PORTUGUESE EMBASSY HAD NOT TALKED TO WELLES. HE WAS SHOCKED TO SEE THIS ACCOUNT, PARTICULARLY AS US HAD ASSURED PORTUGUESE WE WOULD DO OUR BEST TO KEEP LAJES OPERATION FROM PUBLIC DOMAIN.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 211303

3. STABLER REPLIED THAT HE REGRETTED APPEARANCE OF STORY. WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE WELLES, WHO HAS EXTENSIVE CONTACTS IN WASHINGTON, GOT HIS INFORMATION. THEMIDO WAS REMINDED THAT PORTUGUESE PRESS HAD CARRIED EARLY ACCOUNT OF USE OF

LAJES, AND THIS IN COUNTRY WHERE CENSORSHIP LEGAL. HE REPLIED THAT SITUATIONS WERE NOT SIMILAR SINCE PORTUGUESE JOURNALIST HAD ONLY REPORTED FACT THAT AIRCRAFT PASSING THROUGH LAJES, WHILE MONITOR STORY CLEARLY STEMMED FROM NEWS LEAK OF INFORMATION ONLY AVAILABLE TO TWO GOVERNMENTS.

4. ACCORDING TO THEMIDO, STORY COULD BE VERY DANGEROUS FOR PORTUGUESE. HE SAID THAT THERE HAD ALREADY BEEN SEVERAL REFERENCES IN UN TO PORTUGAL'S ROLE IN RESUPPLY OPERATIONS, AND REMINDED STABLER THAT US HAD NOT RESPONDED TO GOP MEMORANDUM WHICH RAISED THIS POINT. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE FELT CONGRESS MIGHT BE LESS LIKELY MOVE TO ELIMINATE ANTI-PORTUGUESE AMENDMENT NOW THAT THIS STORY REFERRED TO POSSIBILITY OF ELIMINATING AMENDMENT. STABLER SAID THAT WE WERE GIVING VERY CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT MEMORANDUM, AND HOPED HAVE A REPLY SOON. HE SAID THAT IT WAS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT CSM STORY MIGHT HAVE HELPFUL EFFECT IN CONGRESS.

5. IN DISCUSSING OTHER ACTIONS, STABLER POINTED OUT THAT WE HAD BEEN ENTIRELY ALONE ON A RECENT VOTE IN THE UN ON PORTUGUESE GUINEA. WE HAVE ALSO SPOKEN TO NATO SYG LUNS WHO IN TURN URGED DANES AND NORWEGIANS NOT TO BREAK NATO SOLIDARITY THROUGH RECOGNITION OF GUINEA-BISSAU. ASST. SECRETARY STOESSEL ALSO MADE SAME APPROACH DIRECTLY TO NORWEGIANS IN OSLO. MOREOVER, WE WERE ACTIVELY CONTINUING OUR EFFORTS WITH CONGRESS REGARDING TUNNEY AMENDMENT.

6. THEMIDO SEEMED PLEASED WITH NEWS THESE USG ACTIONS ON BEHALF PORTUGAL. HE SAID HE STILL ACTIVELY SEEKING CONGRESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS, AND STRESSED THAT AMENDMENT MUST BE ELIMINATED. KISSINGER
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PAGE 03 STATE 211303

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